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Technology Article

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SMARTBoard Instructional Methods

Intrigued by the incorporation of student cell phone use in a colleague’s classroom, I looked for a technology article that tell me more about his new trend in educational settings. The article I selected comes from the Heartland Area Education Agency, an Iowa equivalent of the Cooperative Educational Service Agency, CESA, in Wisconsin. It was posted on their World of Media blog under the title Ten Ideas for Using Cell Phones in Education, K-12. Online access to the article may be found at <http://worldofmedia2007-2008.blogspot.com/2009/05/10-ideas-for-using-cell-phones-in.html>.The title of the article accurately represents its content, suggesting there are many ways teachers can utilize cell phones in the classroom. Here is the list of suggested uses.

1. Student response polling or pop quizzes  
2. Find definitions, currency conversion, math equations, translations  
3. Use as an Internet browser to access information  
4. Research  
5. Read news articles and current events  
6. Read books  
7. Download and use education programs such as Google Maps and use as GPS  
8. Use as a digital or video camera to accompany school projects, publishing, etc.  
9. Educate students on appropriate and acceptable social use  
10. Use the voice technology to share engaging lectures or lessons

Why would or should educators have students utilize cell phones in their classrooms? This excerpt gave me reason to pause.

Marc Prensky shares that the average cell phone has more computing power than many of the computers of 10 years ago. He goes on to ask, “How can we harness that power in education?”

It made me think about the benefits of having information available at our fingertips but it also caused me to ponder cell phone use in my own classroom.

What do I think? I am still forming an opinion but can appreciate the advantages of the ten uses listed in the article and above. What I don’t see is a list of concerns or reasons why teachers should not have students utilize cell phones during classroom lessons. Playing devil’s advocate, teachers need to consider the students who do not have cell phones and in particular those without smart phone technology. Is it fair to them? Wouldn’t this draw attention to socio-economic differences apparent in who has the technology and in what form? Teachers need to consider the parents who fund or acquire the technology. Should this item be included on a back to school list? Will it require changes in the cell phone plan to allow more texting? Will it require purchase of a data/internet plan? Will it impose a financial burden on the guardians? Teachers need to consider skill sets that develop with traditional settings. Will cooperative learning be impacted? What will happen to student problem-solving strategies and openness to persevere? Lots of questions pop into my mind with answers that support a position of proponent and opponent, leaving me both excited and hesitant about trying the technology. I remain undecided.

Before I close, I would like to copy some additional links the article provided for readers who would like to explore the use of smart phone technology in the classroom further. Glancing at the links, I feel this component of the Heartland Area Education Agency information may be the most useful in helping me decide to take the next step and say “yes” to incorporation cell phones into my instruction strategy toolbox.

Cell Phones in Learning Wiki

<http://cellphonesinlearning.wikispaces.com/>

10 Ways to Use a Camera Phone in Education Blog by Jeff VanDrimmelen

<http://edutechie.com/2007/06/06/8-ways-to-use-camera-phones-in-education/>

Mobile Phones in Education: Constructive Not Destructive Power Point by Sharon Tonner

<http://www.slideshare.net/satonner/mobile-phones-in-education-constructive-not-deconstructive-124979>

2009 Horizon Report for K-12 Edition focused on Mobile Technologies

<http://www.nmc.org/pdf/2009-Horizon-Report-K12.pdf>

Teach Digital Wiki by Wes Fryer

<http://teachdigital.pbwiki.com/cellphones>

Duke University Center for Instructional Technology: Mobile Devices in Education

<http://cit.duke.edu/tools/mobile/index.html>

Cell Phones Get Top Marks in Classroom - article from eSchool News

[http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/around-the-web/index.cfm?i=58186](http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/around-the-web/index.cfm?i=58186%20)

